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| SEAL_Revised, Brighter Letters_crop_compressed | **Commonwealth of Massachusetts** |
| ***Executive Office of Health and Human Services*** |
| **Department of Youth Services** |
| **COVID-19 Program Recreation Activities Updated Modifications** |

With the lifting of many restrictions following the termination of the State of Emergency declared in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, DYS has continued with modifying operations to reduce the risk of COVID-19 exposure and transmission. These modifications will be re-evaluated as needed by DYS leadership, consistent with Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and Massachusetts Health Department guidance and are subject to change upon further notice.

Transmission of COVID-19 in the population at large continues to pose a threat of introduction into our residential settings. The risk of rapid transmission of the virus within one location or a co-location is likely to have an amplifying effect on the overall spread of the virus within our settings.

Youths, **regardless of vaccination status**, may participate in group program activities in the setting so long as they are not currently isolated or quarantining due to infection, exposure, or new admission status who is not fully vaccinated.

Individuals are considered fully vaccinated individuals 14 days or more after their final dose. In a 2-dose series, like the Pfizer or Moderna vaccines, the individual is fully vaccinated 14 days or more after their second dose. After a single-dose vaccine, like Johnson & Johnson’s Janssen vaccine, the individual is considered fully vaccinated 14 days or more after the single dose.

Participating youths must wear a face covering, if they are not fully vaccinated. Fully vaccinated youths do not need to wear masks when participating in group program activities with other youths who are fully vaccinated.

Staff should continue to encourage social distancing during group program activities. Youths who are fully vaccinated or wear masks do not need to social distance.

When there is a confirmed COVID-19 positive youth in a setting, the setting should suspend group program activities until the setting has gone 14 days without a new COVID-19 positive youth.

It is essential that personnel and youth continue to adhere to the **DYS Cleaning and Disinfection Protocol for Prevention of COVID-19** **https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/disinfecting-building-facility.html** while enforcing social distancing in residential programs. Cleaning and disinfecting should be conducted during activities as well as at least once daily by the staff in charge. **At no time should youth have unsupervised access to cleaning products.**

Items such as ping pong paddles, balls and video game consoles/controllers shall not be shared, unless those items can be cleaned properly with a sanitizing solution. This also includes the sanitization of tables and chairs during recreational or leisure time.

* All youth on medical isolation, quarantine, and who are not deemed appropriate by medical staff due to COVID-19-like symptoms AND unvaccinated youth who have been involved in a recent restraint/ physical altercation, attended a home pass, attended court, attended a medical appointment, or participated in a visit in which social distancing and proper PPE was not followed, cannot participate in any group program activity. These youth shall be afforded opportunities to participate in activities either individually or with appropriate social distancing and proper use of PPE. Some activities will not be available to them due to health and safety measures during COVID. Once cleared by Program Administration and Medical, youth who have completed medical isolations, quarantines or whose situation as described above has resolved, may participate in group program activities.
* Youth who do not comply with appropriate PPE use consistent with their vaccination status may be removed from a group program activity. A youth engaged in any inappropriate physical touching and or physical altercations will be immediately removed from the group program activity.
* Staff are prohibited from removing their face coverings while participating in the group program activity along with youth. Their primary role is to supervise and ensure that youth in group program activities are adhering to proper play, PPE use based on vaccination status and engaging positively with each other.
* Prior to and immediately following each group program activity, youth and staff will wash their hands. Unvaccinated youth and supervising staff must wear masks and adhere to PPE Guidelines. All materials and spaces used in the group program activity will be properly cleaned and sanitized and items stored in a place that is specifically labeled for that group. Staff is responsible to clean the equipment before and after use.

Youth who are quarantined or on medical isolation are to be issued their own deck of cards and their own social board games including dominoes for individual use. All items will be clearly labeled with the individual youth’s name.

* Utilization of video games should also be strictly monitored. Staff supervising the activity must ensure that the controllers are sanitized after each use and not passed back and forth between youth during a game. Staff should also keep all game discs in a staff controlled area to ensure that the youth are not switching them out without proper sanitizing. In addition to cleaning these items after each use, there should be overall cleaning and disinfecting daily.
* Youth can engage in activities such as basketball, volleyball and frisbee. Proper PPE wearing and guidance regarding good sportsmanship and mindfulness of others should be reinforced throughout the activity.

As an agency, we want to continue to have staff and youth participate in activities together only if social distancing and proper PPE is worn. For example, games such as charades can be played by staff and youth collectively while allowing social distancing by modifying roles and responsibilities: participants could choose one person to pick the categories for each round; youth or staff can act out or draw if they have individual poster paper while maintaining appropriate social distancing.

* When utilizing the weight room or fitness equipment in programs, arrange all equipment so exercise areas are spaced at least three (3) feet apart. Staff must ensure all equipment is sanitized after each use. Staff should have access to cleaning supplies to be used before and after each use of the equipment. At no time should youth have unsupervised access to cleaning products.
* The interior gym spaces may be used with adherence to the protocols and guidance on proper cleaning and use of PPE.

DYS appreciates that this is a different way of conducting group program requires lots of creativity; however, it is in the best interest of all youth and staff in our programs to follow the protocols and guidelines described in this document. By adhering to the CDC recommended guidelines regarding social distancing, wearing PPE and proper sanitation, we are working together to minimize the infection and spread of COVID19 in our residential settings. In doing so we continue to engage our youth in our programs while maintaining social connectedness and boosting morale.

All programs are encouraged to contact their regional leadership for support in procuring disposable games and activity kits, or additional social board games and materials needed. We are also encouraging leadership within programs to solicit feedback from youth and staff as to what is working and well and suggestions for other options. So please take time during your shift changes and community meetings to solicit feedback and share with your regional leadership and your Program Monitor so we then may share with our colleagues across our continuum.

**Here are some helpful suggestions and links to additional games and activities that can be played with strict adherence to this guidance. Please ensure that when choosing a game, the youth and staff are maintaining social distancing and if playing in cohorts, staff are only supervising and encouraging youth and not participating with the cohort group:**

1. **Basketball**: Small teams can play together. Staff must ensure the youth keep a safe distance while on the court.
2. **Basketball:** Can play 3-point shootout and one on one or teams of two within their cohort group. An individual youth may run individual skill drills using their own equipment.
3. **Chess/Checkers:** Can be played if proper cleaning protocols are followed outlined in above section of this document.
4. **Card games:** Can be played if proper cleaning protocols are followed outlined in above section of this document
5. **Whiffle ball:** Can be played if proper cleaning protocols are followed outlined in above section of document
6. **Bean bag toss:** Can be played if proper cleaning protocols are followed outlined in above section of document
7. **Weight room:** Can be utilized **if the guidance is adhered to on page 3.**
8. **Bingo:** Can be played individually if social distancing
9. **Work Out Video:** Can be doneindividually if space allows
10. **Scavenger hunt:** Can be carried out within group
11. **Movie Night:** Chairs must be placed in rows, separated by proper social distancing and there must be proper PPE use based on vaccination status for youth.  Individual popcorn bags are to be provided to each participating youth.
12. **Football combine drills:** Youth may complete pushups, sit ups, bench press, 40-yard dash, 3 cone drill and shuffle drill.
13. **Obstacle course:** groups can compete with each other if using adequate space and appropriate supervision is available
14. **Video games:** May be played if **proper cleaning protocols are followed outlined in above section of this document.**
15. **Spa Day:** Can be provided if individual spa materials are available for all youth.
16. **Musical Instruments:** Limited to String, Percussion and Keyboard; CDC guidance on cleaning and disinfection of equipment must be followed prior to and after each use. (see attached document)
17. **Recording Equipment:** Ensure proper cleaning after each use.

**Additional Resource Links:**

Title: Dots Description: Dots game that illustrates how we limit our perspective and choices Directions: <http://www.nwlink.com/~donclark/leader/diverse2.html>

Description: Artwork, murals, painting the units with words and images that align with believing in kids

Title: Exercise videos Description: If there is room and they are able, physical activities help to relieve stress. They could do exercise videos. Be aware of youth health needs

Title: Improv games Description: Games that require youth to think on their feet Directions: <https://www.childfun.com/recommendations/best-improv-games-for-kids> / Notes: Some of the games on this page are for much younger children, but some may be appropriate for older youth

Team Development Activities

Title: Group membership Description: Activity that illustrates different groups we’re a part of and what’s good about those groups Directions: <http://www.nwlink.com/~donclark/leader/diverse2.html> Notes: Facilitation skills will be very important

Title: Getting to know you Description: Group finds their similarities and differences using the image of a flower Directions: <http://www.nwlink.com/~donclark/leader/diverse2.html>

Title: Mad Libs Description and directions: Fill out a story using parts of speech (noun, verb, adjective, etc.). It can also be good for grammar learning. Notes: You’ll need to buy your own Mad Libs books, but some printable can be found here: <http://www.madlibs.com/printables/>

Title: Person, Place, Action (if writing is challenging, maybe it’s verbal) Description: Youth write a short story based on writing prompts of a person, place, and an action. Maybe it can be verbal if writing is challenging. Directions: <https://www.fluentu.com/blog/educator-english/english-activities-for-teenagers/>

Title: Journaling Description: Give youth time to quietly journal. Set expectations about journals. Nobody should read other people's journals. You can give topics for youth to journal about or have it been freeform.

Title: What makes you safe? Emotionally and physically? Description and directions: Discussion on what makes you feel safe - emotionally and physically - or to displace it some - what makes youth feel safe Notes: Need to be aware of trauma and also developmental level of the group.

Title: Coat of Arms Activity Description and directions: Areas on the Coat of Arms can be modified to ensure kids don’t do gang stuff, etc. Possible areas are: What are your strengths? What is important to you? What would you like to achieve (that does not put you or others in harm's way)? What animal best represents you? What is your superpower? Notes: Images can be found here: [https://drive.googlecom/drive/folders/0Byf0JWTGzTdcMkxXam9Pd0VsWFk](https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/0Byf0JWTGzTdcMkxXam9Pd0VsWFk)

Title: Friendly structured debate on a chosen topic. Description and directions: Pick a topic and a structure for debate. Notes: Be mindful of the developmental level of the group and facilitation, and ensure structure. Vet topics to make sure they are not topics that might trigger trauma responses. This activity is a good way to teach youth how to express opinions and listen to different viewpoints.

Title: Make no-sew blankets for people who need them Description: Identify community members who might want blankets. Description: <https://www.doinggoodtogether.org/bhf/make-no-sew-blankets> Notes: This could give the youth an opportunity to have something to give.

Title: Spruce up the living area Description: Artwork, murals, painting the units with words and images that align with believing in kids

Title: Unit Banner Creation Description: Have each unit create a banner on a theme

Title: Bingo (for treats of course) Notes: There are several bingo card generators on the internet. Here’s one that lets you customize: <https://myfreebingocards.com/bingo-card-generator>

Title: Charades can be played with both youth and staff while applying social distancing. Here is a list of ideas for topics: <https://www.pinterest.com/pin/528961918722911172/>

Title: Spelling Bee can be played with both staff and youth. Youth and staff may be spread out within the programs space in order. If a youth or staff spells a word incorrectly they may take a seat or move to another area. <https://www.spelling-words-well.com/spelling-bee-word-list.html>

Title: Name That Tune: Youth and staff will listen to a song for two seconds or more to try and identify it. The youth or staff with the most amounts of correct answers wins the game. You can use any section of a song to use as part of the game.

Title: Singo: Similar to bingo you may use sound clips instead of numbers. Youth who identify the song and have the corresponding song on their sheet wins. If this is too complicated, you can certainly default to the traditional version called Bingo. You may also substitute words for numbers in Bingo. <https://myfreebingocards.com/bingo-card-generator>

Title: Charades: Here is a link to discuss the general rules of charades. Both youth and staff are encouraged to participate in this game. <http://www.getcharadesideas.com/resources/charades-ideas-for-kids-of-all-ages-the-ultimate-list-130-ideas/>

THESE LINKS WILL BE ON PULSE FOR EASY ACCESS FOR STAFF